Pronunciation

This lesson is about the usage of a dictionary to know the pronunciation of English words.

The students of English are often worried about English pronunciation because spellings of English words often cause confusion. The students generally face difficulty to pronounce a word correctly after they read it.

This lesson is in two parts. In the first part, you will be familiarized with a set of special symbols known as phonemic symbols that are used to indicate each speech sound.

The second part of the lesson consists of a few exercises.

Look at the following words:

Chorus	k	sound
Church	chey	sound
Ration	sh	sound
Machine	sh	sound

The word 'chorus' which begins with the letters ch is pronounced with the 'k' sound while in the word church the letters ch is pronounced as the Urdu/Punjabi letter : .

e.g. In the word 'ration',- tion is pronounced as 'sh' while in the word 'machine'- 'ch' is also pronounced as 'sh'

Remember that the phonemic symbols are given in slash brackets in the dictionary. / /

Now try to say these words louder. Pay special attention to the shape of your mouth and lips.

Short Vowels (7) **Long Vowels** (5)

LONG VOWELS	
iː	as in sh**ee**p
ɑː	as in f**ar**m
uː	as in c**oo**l
ɔː	as in h**or**se
ɜː	as in b**ir**d

SHORT VOWELS	
ɪ	as in sh**i**p
æ	as in h**a**t
ʊ	as in f**oo**t
ɒ	as in s**o**ck
e	as in h**ea**d
ə	as in **a**bove
ʌ	as in c**u**t

Notice that the symbols for long vowels have two small dots in front of them.

Diphthong

ɪə here	eɪ wait	
ʊə tourist	ɔɪ boy	əʊ show
eə hair	aɪ my	aʊ cow

Next we have 8 **diphthong** vowels. These are sounds which are produced by combining two vowel sounds. There is a movement or glide from one vowel sound to another.

So there are 20 vowel phonemes in English. (7 short, 5 long and 8 diphthongs).

Now we will look at the **consonant** sounds / phonemes. In English there are 24 consonant sounds. These are the sounds produced by the complete or partial stoppage of breath.

Now repeat after me.

p	b	t	d	f	v	θ	ð
/pin/	/bæd/	/tɪn/	/dɔg/	/faiv/	/væn/	/θɪn/	/ðæt/
pin	bad	tin	dog	five	van	thin	that
m	n	ŋ	h	ʧ	ʤ	k	g
/mæn/	/nəuz/	/θɪŋ/	/ha:f/	/ʧə:ʧ/	/ʤæm/	/kaind/	/gʌn/
man	nose	thing	half	church	jam	kind	gun
s	z	ʃ	ʒ	l	r	w	j
/sei/	/zu:/	/ʃip/	/meʒə/	/leg/	/rʌn/	/wə:k/	/jes/
say	zoo	ship	measure	leg	run	work	yes

Another area closely related with English pronunciation is STRESS.

Stress

Stress is the extra force used in pronouncing or speaking a particular word. A dictionary will indicate stress by a tiny mark on the top of a word like this: `

When you look up a word in the dictionary, be sure to learn where the stress falls on the word. E.g.:

(a) **mother table after**

– In these examples the first part of the word is stressed.

(b) **hotel bamboo banana**-

There are some words in English which have the same spelling but belong to different parts of speech because they are stressed differently. E.g.

` rebel (n) The r ` ebels laid down their arms.

re ` bel (v) Children re ` bel against their parents.

` present (n) The ` present was lovely.

` present (adj) Were you ` present at the party?

Pre ` sent (v) Please pre ` sent your work.